

REMARKS

Applicants concurrently file herewith an Excess Claim Fee Payment Letter for one (1) excess independent claim.

Claims 1-3, 5-8 and 10-19 are all of the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 1-3 and 5-8 have been amended to more particularly define the invention. Claims 10-19 have been added to claim additional features of the invention.

It is noted that the claim amendments are made only for more particularly pointing out the invention, and not for distinguishing the invention over the prior art, narrowing the claims or for any statutory requirements of patentability. Further, Applicants specifically state that no amendment to any claim herein should be construed as a disclaimer of any interest in or right to an equivalent of any element or feature of the amended claim.

Claims 1-3 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishinaga (U.S. Patent No. 6,476,410) in view of Udagawa (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0141509).

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 6-8 are allowed and that claims 4 and 5 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants submit, however, that all of the claims are allowable.

However, merely in an effort to speed prosecution, Applicants have incorporated the allowable subject of claim 4 into independent claim 1 and have rewritten allowable claim 5 in independent form. Applicants have canceled claims 4 and 9. Applicants respectfully submit that the Application is in a condition for allowance.

New claims 10-19 have been added to provide more varied protection for the claimed invention and to claim additional features of the invention. These claims are independently patentable because of the novel features recited therein.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 1-3, 5-8 and 10-19, all of the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance,

the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

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